



Yellow Nutsedge

DID YOU KNOW?

People think yellow nutsedge is one of the world's worst weeds. Yet in the United States, many poor farmers in Florida and Georgia used to grow yellow nutsedge to feed to hogs and cattle. The tubers also made tasty snacks for farm families during the winter.



ORIGINS

Yellow nutsedge, sometimes called chufa, is native to the Middle East. It was an important food crop in ancient Egypt.



Yellow nutsedge tubers have been found in vases in the tombs of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs.

THE YELLOW NUTSEGE PLANT

Yellow nutsedge is a perennial. Its tubers over-winter in the ground. When the weather becomes warm, the tubers send up shoots. The plant grows very well where the ground is wet.

The plant is 70 to 90 cm (8 in to 3 ft) tall.

The flower has no petals, but 3-6 stamens.

The stem of a sedge has three sides while a grass stem is round.

Undeveloped leaves are bright green when young, but become pale green with age.



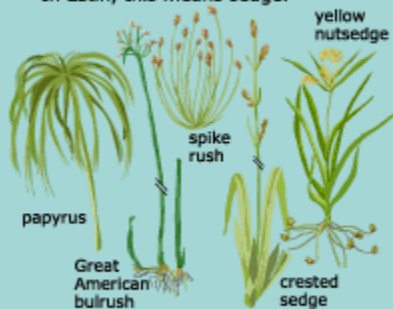
The round tubers are ready to dig up when the seeds appear.

CLASSIFYING YELLOW NUTSEGE

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

In Latin, this means sedge.



Yellow nutsedge looks a lot like grass, but it belongs to a completely different family.

GENUS

Cyperus

Yellow nutsedge is closely related to papyrus, which ancient Egyptians used to make paper.



The outside of the stem was removed, and the inside was sliced into strips to make paper.

SPECIES

esculentus

yellow nutsedge



In Latin, this means "edible."

Both animals and humans can eat the very nutritious yellow nutsedge tubers.

Today, yellow nutsedge is grown in West Africa, Spain, and China. The tubers can be boiled and then eaten as a vegetable. They can be ground and used to make a drink. They can also be toasted, ground, and used as flour. The tubers are high in fatty acids that can protect against heart disease. They are also high in iron and potassium.

FRIEND . . .

In the United States, yellow nutsedge is an important food source for deer, wild turkey, and waterfowl.



. . .OR FOE?

Yellow nutsedge can invade farm fields and gardens, especially where the soil is wet. It is very difficult to control.

A single plant can make several thousand tubers. Each tuber can sprout and grow into a new plant. Underground stems (rhizomes) can also sprout and grow into new plants.



Yellow nutsedge has really taken over here, because the soil was wet in the spring.